

The attention of our readers generally, but of the Committee on Legislation in particular, is earnestly called to an editorial in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* of July 4, entitled "A Law Against Nasty Advertising in Michigan." An amendment was added to the new Michigan Medical Practice Act authorizing "the Board of Registration in Medicine to revoke the certificate, after due notice and hearing, of any registered practitioner, who inserts advertisements in newspapers, pamphlets, circulars, or other written or printed paper relative to venereal disease or other matter of an obscene or offensive nature derogatory to good morals." This amendment was made possible because of the thorough organization of the medical profession in Michigan. It was actually aided by one or two newspapers! The *Detroit Journal* has for some time refused to receive quack advertisements. This is a worthy amendment and one which should be enacted by all State legislatures, for it attacks what the *Journal* aptly calls the greatest curse of our profession. What has been accomplished in Michigan can also be accomplished in California and other states if committees on legislation will do their duty. Too often the only work done by such committees is to make an annual report to their society of the work done, or attempted, during the year—by others. The Committee on Legislation of the American Medical Association is at present forming an Auxiliary National Committee with representation in every county medical society. Here is work for these committeemen. If each of these men will enter into this work with an earnest purpose to do his duty, such an amendment can be enacted by our next Legislature. A great deal of assistance can incidentally be rendered by the Committee on Legislation of our State Society.

Committees are proverbially slow to get to work and to do that which they are appointed to do; this is especially true of committees of the "standing" variety. What is everybody's business is nobody's business.

County societies should be particularly careful in the selection of committees on admissions, or committees of investigation, and should see that men who will do their duty are placed on such committees. When an application for membership is placed before a society it should be acted upon with as little delay as the organic law of the society permits. There is no excuse for holding an application over for two, three or four meetings (an actual experience reported to the *JOURNAL*) without any action—all because the proper committee has not reported. When men accept such positions they should do so with the clear understanding that the honor carries with

it some responsibility, some work to do, and they should see to it that they do their duty. Too long has the idea maintained that an office in a medical society is a delicately conferred compliment. If we are ever to lift ourselves out of the slough, to clean ourselves up and do the things that we ought to, each and every officer in each and every component society will have to awaken to the fact that there is something for him to do—in addition to making a nice little speech of acceptance of the honor conferred upon him. The only way to get anything done is to do it; the only way for us to build up and strengthen our organization is for every man to do what he agreed to when he accepted an office.

One very important asset of complete organization of the medical profession is the ability to get rid of illegal practitioners.

**ORGANIZATION AND THE QUACK** The illegal practitioner thrives well, when let alone, and is a menace to the community upon which he preys. If he has a degree and will not take an examination for a license, it is because he knows his own ignorance and fears the result; if he has no degree he is even one stage worse in the class of fakers. In either event he should be removed. One great object of organization is to locate first, and then get rid of, these quacks. It can easily be done when all reputable practitioners unite, point out the illegal ones, and then cooperate in their removal. This work should properly be in the hands and under the direction of the Board of Medical Examiners, and it is a pleasure to note that the Board is doing all it can under the circumstances to prosecute these gentry. But every member of the Society should help in the work. Each member who knows of an illegal practitioner or one whose license is not on record, should at once notify the Board of Examiners. Please send such names either to the President of the Board, Dr. Dudley Tait, 1054 Post Street, San Francisco; Dr. George G. Gere, Secretary of the Board, Parrott Building, San Francisco, or to this office. The *JOURNAL* will be glad to forward such names to the Board.

In accordance with the instructions of the last House of Delegates, the Board of Trustees has actively undertaken the work of organization of county societies in counties where they do not exist. During the months of September and October three such county societies were brought into life, and arrangements have been made for organizing several others. We desire to appeal to every member of the Society for aid in this work. Surely each one knows someone, either in his own county or in some other, who is not a member of a county society. If your friend lives in a county where there is

no county society, will you not ask him to write to this office for information and assistance in forming one? Or, if there are but few physicians in his county, will you not ask him to join the society of the nearest county? And lastly, will you not ask your friend, in the same county with you, to join your own county society? If you have no friend who is not a member of your county society, ask one who is not your friend, if such there be, for he certainly ought to be both your friend and a member of his county society. There is no single thing that hurts all parties to the quarrel so much as a fight among medical men. The Society is growing rapidly, but it should grow even more rapidly, and it should continue to grow until every reputable physician in the State is enrolled on the lists of county medical societies.

The JOURNAL is pleased to acknowledge the receipt of a communication from the secretary of

#### THE PROFESSION IN NEW YORK

the New York State Medical Association, inclosing sundry documents. These pertain to the matter of an amalgamation of the State Society and Association, or rather to the steps being taken to secure this union. The Society, noting that the obsequies of the "Code of Ethics" were properly celebrated at New Orleans, suggests that its committee on conference meet a similar committee from the Association once more, and see what may be done in view of the altered condition of things. The Association, no longer painfully hampered and constrained by the archaic document which it has so long and so arduously cherished and tended, has, through a special meeting of its council called for the purpose, resolved that a committee of five be appointed, and "said committee is hereby empowered to do whatever is necessary and expedient to bring about such a union in a just and equitable manner." The Society says: "The committee asks for careful deliberation in conference that both the Society and the Association may in the near future be able to present completed and satisfactory plans to the state bodies for ratification." This is certainly the best of good news, but one could hardly be blamed, should he wonder: "Will there be more exchange of frigidly polite correspondence, or will something actually be done to which I may say, Amen; God be praised?"

The JOURNAL is very jealous of the good name of California and of its physicians. We do not

#### QUESTIONABLE ENDORSEMENTS

like to see the names of California physicians tacked onto the endorsements of various preparations, and especially we dislike to see the names of fictitious persons, located in California by the imaginative "ad-smith," as

the modern advertisement writer has come to be called. Several such infractions of what we are pleased to consider good taste, if nothing more, have come to the attention of the JOURNAL and have been noted in its pages. One eye, at least, will always be devoted to watching the advertising pages of medical journals and will not overlook, we confidently believe, these errors of commission. The JOURNAL does not desire to attack anyone or to say hard things about anyone; but it does believe in living first and foremost for the truth and for decency. Those concerns that need endorsements from California physicians had best make sure that they get good ones and actually living authors, or do without. The JOURNAL stands for every reputable physician in California and will do its best to see that they are protected in their good names as well as in other things.

#### TRUTH

When the den of the biggest "get-rich-quick operator," as he was called by the press, was raided in New York, the fact was disclosed that by far the greater portion of his "clients" were drawn from the professions of medicine and theology; doctors and ministers were easy game. For a generation or two we physicians have been complacent; we have been good natured and lazy; and we have been very credulous. Two important items are printed in this number of the JOURNAL, and they bear directly upon this question. One is a letter from a well-known physician of this State, and the other is an extract from an address delivered by Dr. Beard. True, the address was directed to a pharmaceutical association, but it applies largely to the medical profession as well, and its truths hit us pretty hard. Some months ago we published an editorial note entitled "Pharmacy and Medicine" (page 251) which has been reprinted in a score of medical and pharmaceutical journals, we are very glad to note. It dealt with this question of divided responsibility in the matter of increase in "ready made medicine," and the retrogressive process undergoing in pharmacy. We are directly to blame for much of the present condition of things. Many of us read the statements made by the advertisers of the new and generally secret formula proprietary preparations, or the cheap synthetic German chemicals (absolutely controlled) that flood the country, and we believe what we read or what we are told by the interested parties. We do not stop to think; we do not demand facts instead of statements; we do not know that it is very easy to buy all sorts of endorsements, or to "fake" them if they cannot be bought. We have allowed ourselves and our profession to be used and prostituted in the exploitation of the business of manufacturing unknown stuff into medicine; the business of gam-